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Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 11 of Security Council resolution 1590 (2005), in which the Council requested that it be kept regularly informed of progress in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in the Sudan. The report provides an assessment of the overall situation in the country since my previous report, dated 31 January 2008 (S/2008/64). Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1784 (2007), the present report also provides an assessment of any changes that may be needed to the current mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) to enhance its ability to assist the parties in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In addition, the report provides an assessment of progress in the implementation of plans for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and sets out benchmarks for achieving further progress in that area, as requested by the Council in its resolution 1784 (2007).

II. Security situation

2. During the reporting period, the overall security situation in the UNMIS area of responsibility remained relatively calm. The parties continued to observe the ceasefire and to cooperate in the ceasefire joint monitoring mechanisms created under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. At the same time, however, the continued presence of military personnel of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) around the oilfields and other areas along the disputed 1956 borderline remained a source of tension, as each side continued to dispute certain military positions held by the other.

3. Clashes over migration routes and grazing rights in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Abyei, which were addressed in my last report, continued to be the cause of considerable unrest. A road accident on 7 February in Balom, 28 kilometres north of Abyei, involving an SAF truck and vehicles carrying the Commissioner for Abiemnom and his escort ended in a firefight between SPLA and local Misseriya tribal militia, injuring several people. That and other similar incidents have raised tensions in the Abyei area, in some instances triggered or fuelled by false statements in the local media.

4. It has been difficult for UNMIS to properly monitor the situation or verify reported incidents, since the Mission continued to face serious restrictions on its

movement imposed by both sides in the Abyei region, including denial of security clearances for air patrols. Although both parties agreed to a limited lifting of United Nations movement restrictions from 5 April 2008 for fourteen days, the lifting of restrictions only applied to a limited number of locations and did not allow the United Nations freedom of movement to verify troops in critical areas such as Muglad, Grinti/Meiram and Heglig.

5. The frequency of incursions into Southern Sudan by splinter groups of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) increased during the reporting period. The groups carried out attacks against villages and the local population in Western Equatoria state, raiding cattle and abducting women and children, in some instances resulting in deaths. It appears that the LRA elements involved are commanded by mid-ranking officials and are operating alone. The groups are apparently moving in a westerly and north-westerly direction towards the Central African Republic.

III. Political developments

6. As the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) entered their fourth year as partners in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the relationship between them has demonstrated considerable resilience. Both acknowledge that the continued implementation of the Agreement is fundamental to their interests. At the same time, however, the partnership has not yet generated momentum in all areas of implementation, which overall remains considerably behind schedule.

7. On 14 February, President Omar al-Bashir reshuffled the Cabinet of the Government of National Unity, reallocating the portfolios of several NCP Ministers and Ministers of State. Meanwhile, the President of the Government of Southern Sudan replaced the Governor of Upper Nile state, Dak Duop Bishok, with another NCP candidate, Gatluak Deng Garang, with effect from 18 February. Furthermore, on 7 March, Jemma Kumba was appointed as the new Governor of Western Equatoria state. Ms. Kumba is the first female Governor in Southern Sudan since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. During the reporting period, both parties continued to reach out to opposition parties to discuss national issues and the scope for cooperation in advance of the national elections scheduled for 2009.

8. The third meeting of the Sudan Consortium is expected to take place from 5 to 7 May in Oslo. Preparations have been marked by strong collaboration between the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan delegations. In a positive indication of cooperation between the parties on development matters, a joint Government of National Unity-Government of Southern Sudan programme document is expected to focus on joint support to marginalized communities in the border areas. It is expected that the Consortium will be preceded by a closed-door discussion on Darfur, enabling the focus of the event to remain on Comprehensive Peace Agreement issues.

IV. Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

9. A number of important milestones remain to be reached if the parties are to complete the interim period in a timely manner. They include final redeployment; the formation of Joint Integrated Units; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants; border demarcation; the resolution of the Abyei issue; preparations for the census and elections; and wealth-sharing concerns, including division of the oil revenues derived from the disputed area of Abyei. Those issues are interlinked. Progress must be made in parallel; delay or confrontation in one area will affect implementation in the other areas.

10. The Technical Ad Hoc Border Committee continued to meet, but did not present its final report as expected during the first quarter of 2008. The Committee has established new timelines that state that it will start its demarcation work in the western and eastern sectors of the border by the end of June 2008, and that work in the central sector will not start before September 2008. In March, the Committee officially requested assistance from UNMIS to purchase satellite imagery to assist in the demarcation process. The United Nations has agreed to procure it by the end of June to support the Committee in adhering to its new timetable.

11. Meanwhile, differences between the parties with respect to the interpretation of the current North-South borderline caused further delay and confusion in the monitoring and verification of redeployed forces, with disagreement over the status of the Sudanese Armed Forces at Abyei and SPLA forces at Kharasana and the assembly area at White Lake/Jau. Although the formation and training of Joint Integrated Units continued, recurring security incidents highlighted their fragile cohesion. Following clashes in Kapoeta on 11 and 12 March 2008 in Eastern Equatoria state, the SAF element of the local Joint Integrated Unit had to be relocated to Torit. However, in Khorflus in Upper Nile state, on 7 and 8 March 2008, the local Unit successfully stabilized a very tense situation after fighting occurred between SPLA and Southern Sudan Police Service elements.

12. The failure of the Presidency to resolve the Abyei issue, including the appointment of a local administration, continued to mar overall implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Following the incident at Balom, Dinka and Misseriya tribal leadership in the Abyei area held reconciliation talks on 20 and 21 February in which they agreed to restore order in the area and to facilitate nomadic migration, and jointly appealed to the Government of National Unity to appoint an Abyei administrator. The Mission actively supported the meetings and provided assistance to the ongoing investigations into security incidents. In a positive step, Government of Southern Sudan President Salva Kiir instructed all Governors of Southern Sudan states to enable free movement of the Misseriya in and out of the South. While those moves helped calm the situation in the short-term, there remains a pressing need to address the Abyei issue at the national level.

13. The SPLM appointment of Edward Lino as its Chairman in Abyei continued to be controversial. Misseriya tribal leadership remained concerned over the appointment, which the SPLM stated was an internal arrangement, acknowledging that only the Presidency could appoint an administrator for Abyei. Following Lino's arrival in Abyei, an increased military presence by both SPLA and SAF in Abyei town contributed to increased tension. Disappointment over the composition and appointment of Lino's administration has fuelled political discontent, marginalizing

moderate voices from both the Misseriya and the Dinka. Those conditions coincided with some reported shifts in population, with many Misseriya moving north out of Abyei town and Dinka moving south.

14. On 11 February, the Presidency decreed 15 to 30 April 2008 as the dates for the national census. In addition to being an important tool for equitable allocation of development funds and service delivery, the census is an important milestone of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that could potentially affect the proportion of seats allocated to Southern Sudan after the national elections. National campaigns to inform the public about the census commenced in February, although with uneven coverage. In the South, the Government of Southern Sudan and UNMIS provided public service announcements in several languages. However, no funding has been made available to cover specific areas, such as Darfur, where misperceptions over the nature of the census exist. Technical preparations made progress, with UNMIS and United Nations partners providing extensive logistical support throughout Southern Sudan and the three areas. In the Abyei area, mapping remained incomplete, with confusion over the respective roles of the Southern Sudan and Southern Kordofan census authorities. In Darfur, approximately 20 per cent of the administrative areas remained unmapped and seemed unlikely to be enumerated owing to the security situation. Strong opposition to the process by rebel groups and the internally displaced persons community in Darfur persists. The monitoring and observation committee of the Southern Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics and Evaluation began selecting and training census monitors and maintains that all formal monitoring should be conducted under its umbrella.

15. On 13 April, the Government of Southern Sudan announced a delay in the census, citing inadequate refugee return and the exclusion of religion and ethnicity from the questionnaire. Following emergency consultations in the Government of National Unity, the Presidency decided that the census would commence on 22 April, and has instructed all levels of government to support that decision, while also reiterating its commitment to recognizing diversity in Sudan.

16. Progress towards the adoption of the electoral law continued to be slow. Various deadlines set by the National Constitutional Review Commission for the parties to resolve their differences over proportional representation, women's representation and the number of constituencies were not met. The draft law has once again been referred to the Presidency. With the National Assembly reconvening in April, it is hoped that the draft electoral law will be tabled during the new session after review in the Cabinet.

17. Figures released by the Ministry of Finance and National Economy show that the total oil revenue for January 2008 amounted to $582.12 million, comprising $464.7 million from exported oil and $117.53 from domestic sales. Of the total revenue, the share of the Government of Southern Sudan amounted to $231.39 million, while the shares of the oil-producing states were as follows: $3.49 million for Unity state; $4.60 million for Upper Nile state; and $2.79 million for Southern Kordofan state.

18. In a decree issued on 12 February, President al-Bashir appointed Derek Plumbly of the United Kingdom as the new Chairman of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission. Mr. Plumbly chaired his first meeting of the Commission on 4 March 2008. My Special Representative for the Sudan, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, has met with the new Chairman and assured him of the Mission's full support to the

Commission. It is hoped that with renewed commitment from the two parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, a more active Commission would be able to focus on key benchmarks and challenges of the Agreement. The Commission, meanwhile, has started preparing its midterm evaluation report to be presented to the Presidency by 9 July 2008.

V. Implementation of other peace processes in the Sudan

19. A key element of the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement was the establishment of the Eastern Sudan reconstruction and development fund, an institution which is to plan and oversee a reconstruction and development programme in the three eastern states. In March, the fund's executive director announced that its budget would be $600 million for five years, of which 275 million Sudanese pounds, equivalent to approximately $134 million United States dollars, would be allocated in 2008. A committee has been established to focus on priority projects, for which implementation will begin in July.

20. In Darfur, my Special Envoy, Jan Eliasson, and the African Union Special Envoy, Salim Ahmed Salim, have continued their efforts to prepare for the start of substantive negotiations between the Government of National Unity and the non-signatory movements. The African Union-United Nations Joint Mediation Support Team continued to consult with the five movement groups. Unification efforts and talks on common positions and negotiation teams were disrupted in February by continued violence and insecurity on the ground. The Special Envoys and the Team have urged the movements to cease all hostilities and begin political dialogue. In the light of the deteriorating security situation in the wider region, the Special Envoys have intensified consultations with regional partners and have urged all to work together towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

21. In Juba, the peace process between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army came to the brink of a final agreement. Six key protocols were signed in February, following talks mediated by the Government of Southern Sudan and facilitated by my Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas, the former President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, together with several observers including the African Union guarantors. The Mission provided logistical support. The parties initialled the final peace agreement on 25 March. However, the planned signing of the final peace agreement has yet to take place. The United Nations continues to support the Joint United Nations-African Union Chief Mediator and to work for a successful conclusion to the peace process.

22. While political consultations continued, planning also began for possible support of the United Nations to various aspects of the implementation and monitoring of a final agreement, including the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former LRA combatants. To that end, my Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas held consultations with the parties, the Government of Southern Sudan and the Special Representatives to UNMIS and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). I will recommend to the Security Council additional provisions that may be required to enable UNMIS to provide support for implementation. Meanwhile, I urge all parties to address the remaining concerns and enable the conclusion of an

agreement that will provide the basis for a lasting peace with justice and support development in Northern Uganda.

VI. Implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan

23. In its resolution 1784 (2007), the Security Council requested me to provide an assessment of whether any changes to the mandate of UNMIS might be needed to enhance its ability to assist the parties in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. A joint technical assessment mission comprised of representatives from UNMIS, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other relevant departments and agencies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme, conducted a review of the UNMIS mandate from 10 to 21 February 2008. The findings and recommendations of the technical assessment mission, which are set out below, build upon the comprehensive strategic review process undertaken by UNMIS in 2007. Particular attention was given to the issue of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as requested by the Council in paragraph 16 (a) of resolution 1784 (2007).

24. Overall, the technical assessment mission found that the mandate of UNMIS was sufficiently broad to allow it to support the peace process in a wide range of tasks. However, three years after the Mission's establishment, it is notable that the Mission's impact has been greatest in those areas where both parties had sought United Nations assistance, and more limited in areas where one or both of the parties had reservations about the Mission's role and engagement. While a few minor adjustments to the mandate are recommended in the present report, the major challenges for UNMIS in supporting implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement are not related to limitations in its mandate, but to the need for the parties to demonstrate the political will necessary to move forward in implementing the commitments they made under the Agreement. In that regard, it was found that UNMIS should enhance its efforts to build trust with the parties and broaden consent for the Mission's role. At the same time, however, the United Nations must recognize the primary responsibility of the parties and that success in the implementation of its mandate is, in the final analysis, dependent on their willingness to work with the United Nations towards that end.

25. The aim of the United Nations effort in the Sudan should be to support implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with a view to helping the parties fulfil their commitment to making unity attractive and to creating the conditions required for a peaceful referendum in 2011. Within its broad mandate, UNMIS should scrupulously focus on the milestones required to reach the referendum peacefully and, in that context, the essential foundations for peace beyond 2011, regardless of the outcome of the referendum. Success indicators would include: sustainable security cooperation; agreed borders; free movement of people and goods; agreement on wealth-sharing; guarantees of minority rights; demobilization of ex-combatants and development of civilian policing; and reduced economic inequality. My Special Representative, through his good offices, will continue to encourage the parties to focus on those key issues and see the achievement of a peaceful referendum as a win-win outcome.

Military monitoring and verification

26. The Mission has completed a number of its core tasks related to monitoring and verification. It has successfully supported the development of the ceasefire institutions at the national and area levels, strengthening the parties' capacity to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement security arrangements. Withdrawal of the Sudanese Armed Forces from garrison towns in the South is now largely complete. Sudan People's Liberation Army troops have withdrawn from Eastern Sudan and have begun movement out of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. UNMIS has also monitored and in some cases assisted the deployment of troops to the Joint Integrated Units, of whom some 85.5 per cent are now in position.

27. However, conditions are not yet in place to begin to reduce the UNMIS military presence. Although the security situation remains calm, it is still volatile, and the need for continued monitoring is considerable. Both parties retain forces in the border area, and monitoring tasks remain vital with regard to Joint Integrated Units. Other armed groups and factions pose localized threats as does the risk of spillover of the Darfur conflict. Moreover, the movement of the Lord's Resistance Army from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to threaten security in parts of Southern Sudan.

28. Depending upon the decisions of the Security Council regarding the peace process between LRA and the Government of Uganda, UNMIS may be required to support tasks associated with implementation of the Juba agreement, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Pending a decision in that regard, it will be important for UNMIS, within existing capacity, to monitor LRA activity in Southern Sudan that may have implications for the security of UNMIS-mandated activities. Close cooperation between UNMIS and MONUC will continue to be important to ensure effective oversight of cross-border security challenges.

Joint Integrated Units

29. Development of the Joint Integrated Units is a complex political and military challenge. The Units are a critical part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement security arrangements, required to enable full redeployment and joint oversight of the oilfields. They are an important symbol of cooperation and will form the nucleus of a new national army if the South votes for unity. However, if they are to play an effective role in building peace in the Sudan, the Units require a clear operational function, basic training and equipment and further integration of SAF and SPLA units.

30. As mandated by the Security Council and at the request of the Joint Defence Board, which is the national body responsible for Joint Integrated Unit development, UNMIS has established a Joint Integrated Unit support cell to assist the Board in identifying requirements and to coordinate international assistance to the Units. Donor assistance from a range of Member States will be essential to building effective Units. The UNMIS support cell is being enhanced with expert civilian capacity, including the capacity to develop a needs assessment and finalize arrangements for receipt of donor contributions through a United Nations trust fund. I encourage the parties to establish a regular consultation mechanism between UNMIS and the Board, to enhance effective information exchange on Joint Integrated Unit issues.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

31. The Council has previously expressed concern about the scope for meaningful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to take place before 2011 and, in its resolution 1784 (2007), requested that I set out a strategy and benchmarks for future progress, as well as the role of UNMIS at the various stages of implementation. Significant reduction in the size of active SAF and SPLA forces is unlikely to begin until there is greater confidence between the parties. Equally, since disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is a nationally led process, responsibility for defining a strategy lies with the parties. At the same time, there is a need to respond to the growing expectations of war veterans and the fiscal pressure to downsize armed forces. The adoption of the National Strategic Plan for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration by the Presidency in November 2007 reflects a new consensus, which should enable that process to begin in 2008. This is an important milestone for both parties.

32. The Northern and Southern disarmament, demobilization and reintegration commissions have indicated their intent to demobilize and reintegrate two categories of personnel before 2011: (a) a group of up to 50,000 personnel, mainly veterans and special needs groups, to enter disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in 2008; (b) combatants absorbed into SAF and SPLA since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (i.e. former other armed groups), totalling approximately 132,000 personnel, to be demobilized between 2008 and 2011. While the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the two groups may not initially result in a significant reduction of military capability on either side, it is a necessary prerequisite to longer-term downsizing and will support overall security and achievement of other Comprehensive Peace Agreement milestones, including redeployment.

33. While the United Nations is ready to support the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the two groups as defined by the parties, a number of essential steps will be required before such operations can begin. Subject to ongoing discussions with the Sudanese authorities, the following prerequisites may serve as useful benchmarks:

(a) Endorsement by the National Council for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Coordination of the national reintegration policy;

(b) Agreement by the parties on the respective roles of the Northern and Southern disarmament, demobilization and reintegration commissions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the three transitional areas;

(c) Signature of a multi-year disarmament, demobilization and reintegration project document by the Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan and the United Nations;

(d) Signature of joint operational plans, including timelines, for the United Nations and both commissions;

(e) Commitment of the Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan and donor funding for 2008-2009 through voluntary contributions to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

34. All stakeholders must jointly agree on a feasible start date for demobilization. Based on current information, 1 August 2008 may serve as a possible target date for

beginning the first phase of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as outlined in the National Strategic Plan. This would require the benchmarks outlined above to be met between April and July 2008.

35. Some positive steps have been taken in recent weeks. On 9 April, a round-table meeting with representatives of the Governments of the North and the South, donor countries and the United Nations under the auspices of the National Council for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Coordination reached agreement on the expected disarmament, demobilization and reintegration caseload associated with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (180,000 ex-combatants). Other positive recommendations included a joint United Nations-donor-government mechanism to determine the range of reintegration costs, and follow-up meetings in the same format to track progress.

36. In support of the above-mentioned process, UNMIS has increased its capacity to assist the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration commissions. An assistance framework detailing the role of the United Nations was adopted by the two Commissions in February. The Mission's role will focus on the provision of support to the disarmament and demobilization (including reinsertion) aspects of the multi-year disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, while UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund will take on support to the reintegration of adult and child combatants respectively. The World Food Programme will provide food assistance to ex-combatants and their families. The modalities of United Nations support are being further discussed with the parties through the Mission's integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Unit.

37. As planning proceeds, it will be necessary for the parties to engage closely with the United Nations and donors in a structured process. All parties will also need to assess the potential for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to create social instability and raise expectations beyond the designated caseload. In order to avoid the potential for violence, the planning process will need to ensure that there are adequate reintegration opportunities in place prior to the start of demobilization. I encourage donors to assist by providing support to the national reintegration strategy, which is expected to be submitted for consideration at the Sudan Consortium in May.

Border demarcation

38. The Mission does not currently have a specific mandate to support demarcation of the 1 January 1956 border between North and South Sudan. However, UNMIS is providing some limited support to the Technical Ad Hoc Border Committee at the Committee's request. The demarcation process is critical to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, as its completion would enable implementation of the Agreement in other areas, such as elections and redeployment, and is indispensable for planning for post-2011 scenarios. While several parts of the boundary are likely to be contentious, a well-documented technical process could help resolve differences and give the parties a sound basis for decision-making.

39. The parties have welcomed recent assistance from UNMIS and have indicated that further assistance is likely to be needed as demarcation moves forward. That may include, for example, acquisition of satellite imagery, map production, visits by

technical advisers, and technical and logistical assistance to the demarcation process once the path of the border alignment is approved by the Presidency.

40. In the light of the preceding requirements, it would be useful for the provision of technical and logistical support to the border demarcation process, as requested by the parties, to be included in the Mission's mandate. Peaceful demarcation will, of course, primarily require both parties to demonstrate the political will necessary to accommodate the other's concerns. The Mission stands ready to offer its good offices and facilitation as may be requested.

Wealth sharing

41. Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in the area of wealth sharing has made good progress in some areas, beginning with the launch of the national currency in 2007. However the transparency of fiscal allocations remains contentious, both in the case of revenue-sharing at the national and Southern Sudan levels and at the level of federal allocations to the states. Conflict over wealth-sharing issues has the potential to derail the Comprehensive Peace Agreement partnership, while failure to address the related grievances of marginalized populations may result in local tensions and conflict. I have encouraged the parties to address the implementation of wealth-sharing aspects of the Agreement as a priority in the second half of the interim period.

42. Responsibility for supporting implementation of the wealth-sharing protocol is spread across a number of United Nations bodies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations Development Programme. The Mission does not have a direct role in any of the commissions associated with the protocol, with the exception of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission. I welcome the efforts being made to strengthen the Assessment and Evaluation Commission as a forum for the parties to address wealth-sharing issues, and would encourage Member States to consider how they may also assist the parties in that regard. UNMIS will continue to serve in its observer role, and within its capacity to promote coordination and to contribute information to other actors.

Elections

43. In resolution 1784 (2007), the Council recalled the UNMIS mandate to provide guidance and technical assistance to the parties in support of preparations for and conduct of elections. The Mission has made significant progress in the establishment of electoral capacity at both UNMIS headquarters in Khartoum and at the Juba field office. The Mission and its international partners continue to meet regularly in Khartoum and Juba on planning for electoral assistance. Further concrete operational planning and preparation will be dependent, however, on the adoption of the electoral law, which will set out the parameters of the electoral process, and on the establishment of the National Electoral Commission, which will be the national counterpart of the United Nations in supporting electoral preparations.

44. If elections are to take place before 9 July 2009, as stipulated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the timelines for preparing effective United Nations and donor assistance are already very short. The Sudan is a vast country; rains impede access to large areas for part of the year; organizational capacity is

limited in areas that have not previously participated in elections due to prolonged conflict; multiple processes (elections and referendums) may be organized by different actors and on different dates, and under intense time pressure. Given those challenges, UNMIS will need to be prepared to respond quickly to assistance requirements, which could necessitate significant additional resources.

45. I have asked the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to identify ways to strengthen UNMIS electoral capacity quickly in the short term to enable essential pre-planning. Such an effort will allow for a timely response to specific assistance requirements from the Sudanese authorities. At the same time, it will be necessary for national actors, the United Nations and donors to reach consensus on the scope of an appropriate United Nations role. Immediately following the establishment of the National Electoral Commission, a specialized assessment mission will be deployed to review the scope of United Nations assistance and resources required, in consultation with national authorities.

Conflict management

46. As demonstrated by the current crisis in Abyei, local conflicts in the Sudan pose a significant and growing threat to successful implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Deep fissures between communities in war-affected areas, combined with weak governance and security institutions in the South, magnify traditional and resource-based conflicts, which quickly become militarized. The census and elections also have the potential to exacerbate tensions, especially if the results are contested. In previous reports, I have noted a number of potential flashpoints, particularly around the 1 January 1956 border areas, in which local conflict can quickly spiral out of control and threaten the wider gains of peace.

47. To enable the United Nations to assist the parties in addressing local conflict, I have requested that UNMIS and the United Nations country team jointly develop a conflict management strategy for the 1 January 1956 border areas. Within its existing mandate and resources, that strategy would allow the United Nations to respond more effectively to requests from both parties for support to conflict resolution and to create an environment conducive to implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The border areas should be a first priority, leading to the establishment of a broader-based conflict management approach by UNMIS and the country team. Within UNMIS, the conflict management strategy is a critical responsibility of the civil affairs team, which will prioritize its activity accordingly.

Protection of civilians

48. Challenges have arisen in the practical interpretation of the UNMIS mandate on the protection of civilians. Given the incidence of violent local conflict and widespread protection challenges, including those arising from abuses by armed forces, it is important to clarify the role of the UNMIS military component and other actors in protecting civilians on the basis of the existing mandate and available resources. I have directed UNMIS to develop an integrated strategy for fulfilling its mandate with regard to the protection of civilians under imminent threat, which will be linked to the approach on conflict management, coordinated with the country team and discussed with the parties.

49. In that regard it will be important for all actors to understand the scope and limitations of the military component, which is primarily configured for monitoring activities, and to maximize complementarity between the UNMIS human rights and protection of civilians units. As the Sudan moves towards recovery and development, UNMIS capacity for the protection of civilians at the state level should be gradually shifted towards a longer-term human rights focus, based on a set of clear benchmarks that would signal the gradual phase-out of the protection of civilians unit and the strengthening of the UNMIS human rights presence as a part of a broader programme of governance and rule of law support.

Police

50. The Mission is mandated to assist the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in restructuring the police service, to assist in police training and to develop a training and evaluation programme. Restructuring operations have focused on the Southern Sudan Police Service, while training and capacity-building programmes are conducted in both North and South. Requests for training assistance in the North are increasing, particularly in the area of community policing. In the South, UNMIS provides basic police training courses, various skills-based courses and on-the-job training on key democratic policing principles in 30 co-located team sites in the South.

51. The Mission's support to police development in the Sudan faces considerable challenges. Two thirds of the Southern Sudan Police Service officers are illiterate, and less than 15 per cent of those currently registered have received any police training. The number of officers has surged in the past year, with thousands of former SPLA or ex-militia forces re-badged as police. Legislation to govern police activity is still lacking at the national and Southern Sudan levels, and the development of a strategic plan for police training by UNMIS has been hampered by the lack of sustainable funding.

52. In the light of the above, UNMIS is revising its police concept of operations, to provide the most effective assistance based on a realistic needs assessment. The Mission's authorized strength of police officers will be reviewed on the basis of that concept. Sustainable funding options for training and capacity-building need to be identified. In the absence of a formal vetting process, a progressive certification system with the Southern Sudan Police Service in Southern Sudan will be introduced as part of the UNMIS mandated evaluation programme.

Rule of law

53. Decades of conflict in the Sudan have drastically affected capacity in the judicial sector. In Southern Sudan, there is a profound lack of physical, institutional and human capacities. While judicial structures are much more developed in the major towns in the North, access to justice and law enforcement elsewhere is limited. The independence of the judiciary remains a concern, and justice for women is a key issue throughout the country.

54. In the past, UNMIS has undertaken rule of law projects in a broad range of areas, with topics often driven by local authorities' capacity and willingness to engage. To increase its impact and to reflect the development of local authorities in Southern Sudan, the Mission is developing a new strategic plan tailored to its specific role in supporting implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

The plan will include coordination of the international community in support of the nationally led justice reform process; monitoring and provision of guidance on legislative reform at the national level; and assistance to the Government of Southern Sudan to expand support to the rule of law beyond Juba in Southern Sudan through targeted and coordinated donor programmes. Those adjustments will be conducted within the existing mandate and overall staffing levels, including by UNMIS-UNDP joint programming in a select number of states and counties.

Support to correctional services

55. As part of the activities under its rule of law mandate, UNMIS is working to re-establish and strengthen the prison system in the Sudan through the provision of advisory, mentoring and training support to national prison officials. In the North, UNMIS has delivered some training courses, yet despite a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the United Nations in May 2006, access to prisons in the North and the three areas remains limited. In the South, good cooperation with national authorities has facilitated capacity-building for prison staff. Recently, the demand for training has expanded exponentially with the integration of a large number of ex-Sudan People's Liberation Army soldiers into the prison service.

56. The Mission's corrections activity is carried out under its broader rule of law mandate, with prison officers seconded against civilian police positions. However, corrections officers are a distinct category of uniformed personnel, and should be acknowledged as such in the Mission's mandate and budget, as is the case in other missions. UNMIS currently has 25 seconded corrections officers. Given the level of activity in carrying out their aspect of the Mission's mandate, it has been determined that 15 additional seconded officers will be required. The future number of officers will be reviewed on the basis of a detailed project proposal. Meanwhile, I encourage the Government of National Unity to implement the Memorandum of Understanding, grant access to prisons in the North, the three areas and Darfur and adopt the concept of co-location of corrections staff in its prisons.

Security and justice governance

57. There is not yet scope for a full-scale process of national security sector reform in the Sudan. However, in Southern Sudan the reorganization of former SPLA combatants into professional military, police and other uniformed services is critical to peace implementation. The services require clear roles and responsibilities and appropriate systems of governance to ensure transparency, accountability and adherence to human rights norms and standards.

58. While the United Nations is the lead actor in training the Southern Sudan Police Service, bilateral donors are more engaged in other areas, including professionalizing SPLA. Both donors and the Government of Southern Sudan have suggested that the United Nations provide support to coordinate assistance to SPLA and wider security sector development in the South. As a first step, an internal United Nations coordination mechanism will be established in the regional coordinator's office in Southern Sudan to give policy guidance to United Nations activities related to justice, corrections, police, the Sudan People's Liberation Army and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, aimed at developing a coherent United Nations strategy in support of the Government of Southern Sudan's policy

framework. That mechanism will facilitate close liaison with the Joint Integrated Unit support cell to ensure consistency of approach.

Human rights

59. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of all the people of the Sudan is a core principle of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. However, despite the enshrining of a bill of rights in the interim national constitution, violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms frequently occur. The Mission's extensive mandate to monitor and support the protection of human rights has until recently been focused mainly on Darfur and Khartoum. Activity in Southern Sudan and the three areas has been steadily strengthened, but many challenges remain, including strengthening the rule of law and national institutions. Legislation for the establishment of a national human rights commission and the enabling law for the Southern Sudan human rights commission have not yet been passed.

60. In the next phase of implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement it will be vital for UNMIS, in the area of human rights, to engage effectively throughout the mission area, including Southern Sudan and the three areas, and to focus on human rights issues most central to the peace process. Priority activities will include monitoring, reporting and analysis of civil and political rights ahead of the census and elections; advocacy with state authorities on key concerns; and capacity-building with state and judicial institutions. The Mission's human rights work will also support the establishment of effective national human rights institutions, including by strengthening civil society capacity for advocacy. To enhance the Mission's capacities in fulfilling those tasks, UNMIS will consolidate its presence in the South, initially in a selected number of state capitals, with further expansion possible once the model has proven effective.

Humanitarian, recovery and development

61. Economic marginalization is among the key grievances underpinning conflict in the Sudan; as such, both the credibility of the peace process at the community level and any effort to make unity attractive depend on the parties' ability to deliver tangible improvements in living standards. While humanitarian programming in Southern Sudan and the three areas remains significant, recovery and development activities have been progressively introduced in the last two years. Much has been achieved, particularly in agriculture and health programmes and in road and mine clearance. The Government of Southern Sudan has itself made significant progress in reconstruction efforts. More capacity-building is needed to enable the Government of Southern Sudan to manage assistance and deliver services. Key areas of support will be public finance, civil service management and support to the Government of Southern Sudan's three-year strategic plan.

62. The United Nations country team is now focusing on a widespread scale-up of recovery and development activities, accompanied by strengthened coordination around the shared goals of Comprehensive Peace Agreement implementation. I hope those efforts will be accompanied by an increased flow of resources from Member States towards recovery activities. Priorities will include effective reintegration of former combatants, returning refugees and internally displaced persons; conflict management and prevention activities; and additional support to recovery and development in the three areas. I have directed that the UNMIS Humanitarian

Assistance Liaison Unit be restructured to reflect the transition to recovery and development, while maintaining support for humanitarian activities.

63. The shift to recovery and development will take place in parallel with the continuation of humanitarian assistance. Although they have clearly decreased relative to recovery activities, humanitarian activities in Southern Sudan and the three areas still require the maintenance of an appropriate management and coordination structure. Particularly in the South, the lack of disaster response capacity further reinforces the need to maintain humanitarian response capacity in country.

Public information

64. The Mission's public information efforts at the national level have met challenges. Provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement intended to foster media reform have yet to be implemented by the parties, and early UNMIS proposals for active dissemination of the Agreement and the UNMIS mandate at the national level have had only partial success. Perceptions of UNMIS have also sometimes been affected by local mistrust of the international community's objectives, especially in Darfur, and by misunderstanding and misinformation about the Mission's role. UNMIS continues to face operational restrictions in Northern Sudan and the three areas. In Southern Sudan, UNMIS has been able to contribute more actively to dissemination of the Agreement. Radio Miraya is a success story, attracting listeners across Southern Sudan.

65. The Mission is now developing a strategy aimed at enhancing understanding of its overall role in the peace process and of its approach to upcoming Comprehensive Peace Agreement milestones, including the census, elections and border demarcation. Key messages will be coordinated across United Nations entities in the Sudan. Public information campaign messages on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, elections and human rights are being developed and will be extended to the north of the country as much as possible.

Structural issues

66. The Mission's original geographical structure was determined by the peacekeeping priorities established in 2005 and by the state structures that existed in the ceasefire zone prior to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Sector offices are located in the pre-Comprehensive Peace Agreement state capitals, with team sites established mainly according to force protection priorities. In addition, UNMIS has established the Juba field office to serve as a liaison point with the Government of Southern Sudan and coordinate UNMIS activities in the region. The Mission's structure will now be adapted to enable it to increase its focus on peacebuilding and support to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement political processes. An expanded civilian geographical presence is envisaged, which would enable representation in all ten state capitals in Southern Sudan and the three transitional areas (Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile). The Mission is exploring whether that shift can be accommodated within existing resources, with due attention to the security implications and the scope for synergies with the United Nations country team presence.

Coordination with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

67. Peace in the Sudan is indivisible. The UNMIS mandate to support implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement implies activity on national issues that have implications for Darfur, including the census and elections. Meanwhile, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) has an explicit mandate to liaise with UNMIS in order to ensure the complementarity of its mandate with objectives of the Agreement. As the two missions operate side by side and share the same interlocutors, UNMIS will need to coordinate closely with the UNAMID as well as with the United Nations-African Union Joint Mediation Support Team to ensure coherence. Policy coordination will be especially important in regard to such national Comprehensive Peace Agreement processes as the census and elections, and to ensure coherence in standards, for example in police training.

68. UNMIS and UNAMID are establishing means to ensure coordination and cooperation, including with the United Nations country team. Arrangements to realize logistic and administrative synergies between UNMIS and UNAMID are underway. Necessary operational coordination between UNMIS, UNAMID and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCAT) will be achieved by the exchange of liaison officers among the Joint Operations Centres of all three missions. Finally, I have instructed the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to ensure that adequate arrangements for policy coherence are also established at Headquarters.

VII. Financial aspects

69. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/289 of 29 June 2007, decided to appropriate for the maintenance of UNMIS for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 the amount of $846.3 million, equivalent to $70.5 million per month. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNMIS beyond 30 April 2008, the cost of maintaining the Mission until 30 June 2008 would be limited to the amounts approved by the General Assembly.

70. As at 31 December 2007, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNMIS amounted to $453.1 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $2,719.3 million. Reimbursement of troop-contributing Governments for troop costs has been made for the period up to 29 February 2008 and for contingent-owned equipment costs for the period up to 31 December 2007.

VIII. Observations and recommendations

71. I am pleased by the parties' sustained commitment to work together in the Government of National Unity and to overcome differences and tensions through dialogue. Preserving the partnership between the National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement is fundamental to the success of the peace process. I also welcome the recent good cooperation between the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan in preparing an agenda for economic recovery and development that will target war-affected areas and contribute to delivering a true "peace dividend" to the people of Sudan.

72. At the same time, I remain concerned that tangible progress in certain key areas of implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which should underpin the partnership, is still lacking. The recent clashes and tensions in the Abyei area represent a potential threat to the Agreement and to the NCP-SPLM partnership. I urge the parties to summon the political will to address difficult outstanding issues, particularly the status of Abyei and the disputed 1 January 1956 border. Further delay in resolving those issues may complicate the situation and lead to unintended conflict.

73. As technical preparations for the census are finalized, I strongly urge both parties to engage fully in resolving remaining differences to enable a full and peaceful census with maximum coverage. Delays in the preparations for national elections are a source of concern. I reiterate the need for the parties to make swift progress in that area and to clarify the scope and scale of the support required from the United Nations. I encourage the parties to work closely with my Special Representative to that end.

74. In the next phase of implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, a reorientation of the Mission's priorities and activities will be required in order to maximize the contribution that UNMIS can make to the process. That will include a shift of priorities towards the increased exercise of the Mission's good offices function, confidence-building and conflict management, particularly at the local level; a reorientation of peacekeeping activities around the 1 January 1956 border area; the reallocation of resources to anticipated hot spots; support to the generation of a visible peace dividend throughout the country; and the strengthening of engagement with state authorities in Southern Sudan. The structural review and strategic assessment carried out by UNMIS and the findings of the technical assessment mission provide a sound and comprehensive basis for planning and implementing those important adjustments.

75. I believe that, overall, the Mission's current mandate is broadly adequate to accommodate the preceding shift in focus. However, relatively minor amendments are required to enable UNMIS to maximize its support to the parties and its contribution to the next phase of implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and to enhance its focus on the priorities identified above. I therefore recommend that in its renewal of the UNMIS mandate the Council authorize UNMIS:

(a) To provide technical and logistical support to the border demarcation process, as requested by the parties;

(b) To provide support to the corrections system, within the overall rule of law mandate, and in that connection authorize the deployment of up to 40 seconded corrections officers;

(c) To monitor, within existing capacity, the activities of Lords' Resistance Army elements in Southern Sudan that may have implications for the security of UNMIS and other mandated activities;

(d) To liaise with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the African Union-United Nations Joint Mediation Support Team, neighbouring United Nations missions and other stakeholders to ensure complementary implementation of those entities' mandates in support of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

In view of the above, I recommend that the Security Council consider extending the mandate of UNMIS for a further period of twelve months, until 30 April 2009.

76. Further progress on redeployment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the formation of Joint Integrated Units will be key to maintaining a secure environment. I note with satisfaction the significant progress made by the parties, in consultation with the United Nations, in the planning and preparation for the multi-year disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. In the light of those developments, and in response to Security Council resolution 1784 (2007), paragraph 16 (a), I recommend that the Security Council support the initial disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of veterans and special needs groups, to begin in 2008. I call upon the Government of the Sudan and its partners to work towards the benchmarks identified, and urge the international community to give the programme its full political and financial support. With regard to the development of Joint Integrated Units, I encourage donors to assist and the Government of National Unity to develop a mechanism to enhance engagement between UNMIS and the Joint Defence Board.

77. Furthermore, at the political level, I encourage the Council to recognize the need for broad-based support to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement process, as well as to post-2011 stability. The crisis in Darfur has diverted attention from the strategic road map offered by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement process. Sustained focus on the Agreement is essential for the long-term stability of the Sudan. At the same time, work to support the Agreement needs to fit into an overall strategy that reflects the challenges in Darfur and Chad in particular. A "whole-Sudan" approach to policymaking as well as a regional vision and close coordination and policy coherence among United Nations entities in the region will be indispensable for facilitating lasting peace.

78. The aim of the United Nations effort in the Sudan should be to support implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, with a view to helping the parties fulfil their commitment to make unity attractive and create the conditions required for a peaceful referendum in 2011. Our activities should also contribute to laying a foundation for stability post-2011. The United Nations role should be to support the parties in fulfilling their obligations in such a way that the interim period does not mark the end of a truce, but the restoration of long-term peace and stability. To achieve this, it will be critical to prioritize those elements of peacebuilding that will enable the parties to manage their future together, whether within a federal structure or as neighbouring states. A successful outcome would be one in which, by 2011, political, economic and security ties are sufficiently strong, and institutions developed to an extent, that either outcome of the referendum could be contemplated peacefully. The United Nations system will scrupulously align its activities, first, along the milestones required to reach the referendum peacefully and, second, along the foundations essential for a sustained peace beyond 2011.

79. In conclusion, I wish to extend my gratitude to my Special Representative, to all United Nations personnel working in the Sudan and to the Member States, including troop-contributing countries and donors, for their determined efforts to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.